

Welcome to the Racial Justice Education Team's Frequently Asked Questions Page

If you've come to this page we hope it is because you are ready to commit yourself to take action against white supremacy. Learning about racism and white supremacy, reflecting on how these forces act within ourselves, in the church and in the world, and at the same time, acting to combat these forces, is the work of this church.

In this document, members of the First Universalist Racial Justice Education Team (RJET) respond to some of the questions we are most frequently asked. In most cases, we are not responding to those questions from our own experience, but have sought out the voices of BIPOC who are compensated for or have volunteered their labor to teach others. We encourage you to seek out the voices of BIPOC yourself whenever you have questions about racism, white supremacy, and racial justice. In some cases, we respond to questions in our own words to convey the language, principals, commitments, and practices of our First Universalist church community. Those of us in RJET who identify as white see ourselves in recovery from our embedded racist beliefs and behaviors. We will make mistakes; we welcome input and suggestions.

No matter how a question has been addressed, know it is not **answered** on this page. Here you will find only one or two takes on what may be very complex topics. We encourage you to see this page as a place to connect to resources for learning. But learning about racism and white supremacy should not be done in a vacuum. We invite you to join with others at First Universalist Church who are supporting and challenging one another in this work.

Do you have a question? Submit your questions to RJET [here](#):

Frequently Asked Questions:

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[Should I wear a 'Black Lives Matter' T-Shirt or put up a Black Lives Matter sign?](#)

[What does it mean for White people to "Stay in Your Lane"?](#)

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What does BIPOC mean?

BIPOC is an acronym that originated in Canada. It stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. This term highlights the unique position of Indigenous people whose land was stolen and Black people whose ancestors were enslaved. The term also highlights the fact that anti-Blackness and

Indigenous-invisibility impact all POC communities. See [The BIPOC Project](#), [Where did BIPOC Come From?](#), and [What Is BIPOC and Why You Should Use It](#)

Should I wear a ‘Black Lives Matter’ T-Shirt or put up a Black Lives Matter sign?

There are no easy answers on whether you should wear a Black Lives Matter t-shirt or display a sign and lots of different opinions. [Maybe do.](#) [Maybe don't.](#) As white people, we must surrender the idea that we can find the one “right” way to be anti-racist. Sometimes there is no one right way. Our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us to listen to what Parker Palmer calls the ‘still, small voice’ within.

Ask yourself some questions. Why do I want to do this? Does it mean I want people to know I am a good white person? Is it to show my outrage that George Floyd was killed? Do I want to express solidarity with the movement for Black lives? Or if you choose to wear this shirt or display a sign will it be an outward demonstration of an authentic investment in systems change? Listen to your heart each time you make this choice for yourself. [Click here to get a lawn sign.](#) Proceeds go to Black-led organizations.

What does it mean for white people to “Stay in Your Lane”?

In the area of racial justice activism, “stay in your lane” means that you have an important place in the movement for racial justice (your lane) and there are places where you should not be “driving.”

When white allies stay in their lane we should:

- Engage with other white folks to learn about racism and white supremacy and interrogate and address our own racist beliefs and actions.
- Work with other white people within our own circles of influence to affect change - at work, our neighborhood, and with family and friends.
- Follow BIPOC leadership, showing up when asked and do what we’re asked to do.

When white allies stay in their lane they should NOT:

- Don’t speak over the voices of BIPOC. Don’t analyze and wonder why BIPOC are doing what they are doing. Instead, we listen and do our own learning.
- Don’t speak for BIPOC. Instead, pass the mic, signal boost BIPOC content creators, use the language of BIPOC leaders, not your own revised language.
- Don’t raise your hand with objections, suggestions, ideas, or even questions when in multiracial contexts not specifically designed as learning spaces for white people.
- Don’t attempt to “lead” actions - instead show up, when asked, to support the solutions posed by Black leaders.

What does it mean to defund or abolish the police?

This is a hard question for many of us white folks who can't imagine what this could mean. Our first instinct may be to have an opinion about whether or not abolishing the police is a good idea. This is a great opportunity to practice "staying in your lane." White folks are not the experts on the impacts of policing, so we need to show up ready to listen and learn without changing the language or focus set out by Black leadership to make it more palatable to ourselves and other white folks. What would it mean for us to be in solidarity with our BIPOC kin without having to understand it completely? The Unitarian Universalist Association [supports the call to defund the police](#), as do the Black-led organizations we are aligned with, Black Visions of Unitarian Universalists, Black Visions Collective, and Reclaim the Block, who are working for safety outside of the police. If you would like to join a "What does it mean to defund the police?" learning circle contact, Bianca Zick, bianca.zick@gmail.com

If you're ready to learn more, start with this local organization with resources for learning and taking action - <https://www.mpd150.com/>, this quick overview - [What does 'defund the police' mean? The rallying cry sweeping the US – explained](#), and this deep dive - [The End of Policing by Alex S. Vitale \(currently discounted e-book\)](#), and here's a trove of articles from [The Marshal Project](#).

Why do we say abolish or defund vs reform?

It is important to follow BIPOC leaders and use their language. Check out [To win justice for George Floyd, we need the rage that abolished slavery](#) in which Jericho Brown explains "We know that it once seemed insane to say, "abolish slavery." It's also important to understand that slavery in the US was never truly abolished - the police and prison system literally replaced it. Watch [13th on Netflix](#) to learn more about this.

Wouldn't it be dangerous to abolish the police?

Some people express fear of a world without police. Perhaps we worry that armed criminals will destroy our property, attack us in the streets, and terrorize our children. These fears live in the imagination of white people, but that is what is literally happening in communities of color - but the "criminals" are the police. Check out [The Police Can't Solve the Problem. They Are the Problem](#) or [To Protect and Serve or to Terrorize Children? Sacramento Police Department Under Fire Again](#).

What would we do if we didn't have police?

BIPOC and other organizers have been developing, implementing, and advocating for alternatives to policing for generations. [There is so much out there but mpd150 is a good place to start](#):